LIVESTOCK NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER & DECEMBER, 2000

DATES TO REMEMBER

CORE, ORNAMENTAL & TURF PESTICIDE REVIEW AND TESTING — NOVEMBER 29, 2000
MILTON EXTENSION OFFICE — 8:00 AM

WILDLIFE FOOD PLOT MANAGEMENT.....DECEMBER 1, 2000
JAY COMMUNITY CENTER — 12:00 NOON - 5:00 PM

REGIONAL PESTICIDE TRAINING.....DECEMBER 7, 2000
JAY COMMUNITY CENTER
CEU'S OFFERED (FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL 675-3107)

FLORIDA BULL TEST SALES — DECEMBER 14, 2000
FEBRUARY 16, 2001
NORTH FLORIDA BEEF RESEARCH UNIT — 12:30 PM

THE NORTHWEST FLORIDA BEEF CONFERENCE AND TRADE SHOW
NORTH FLORIDA BEEF RESEARCH UNIT.....FEBRUARY 15, 2001
FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL 850-482-1252

IN THIS ISSUE

BEEF CATTLE MANAGEMENT CALENDAR

NOVEMBER

? Have soils tested.
? Observe cows daily to detect calving difficulty.
? Use mineral with high level of magnesium if grass tetany has been a problem in the past.
? Check for external parasites and treat if needed.
? Maintain adequate nutrient level for cow herd.
? Calve in well-drained pastures.
? Survey pastures for poisonous plants.
? Start summarizing your annual records, both production and financial - then you will have time to make adjustments for tax purposes.
? Re-evaluate winter feeding program and feed supplies.

DECEMBER

? Begin grazing small grain pastures (if ready).
? Check mineral feeder.
? Check for external parasites and treat if needed.
? Deworm cows and heifers prior to winter feeding season.
? Observe regularly for calving difficulties.
? Rotate calving pastures to prevent diseases.
? Watch for scours in calves.
? Investigate health of bulls before you buy.
? Have dead animals posted by a veterinarian or diagnostic laboratory.
? Complete review of management plan and update for next year.
? Check replacement heifers to be sure they will be ready to breed 3-4 weeks prior to the main cow herd.

FLORIDA BULL TEST SALES

The University of Florida will be having their first annual Bull Test Sales in December and February. The fall-born bull test sale will be held Thursday, December 14 at 12:30 PM at the North Florida Beef Research Unit near Greenwood. After years of hard work, the Florida Bull Test is a reality. There are 117 fall-born bulls on test, and the top performing 2/3 will be sold. Approximately 78 bulls, representing 10 different breeds, consigned by breeders from all across the Southeast will be sold. This will be the most evaluated group of bulls at an auction in Florida. Available data will include: gain test peformance, ultrasound measurement of carcass traits, breeding soundness exam and EPD=s.

All bulls have received equal treatment and have been evaluated by the University of Florida in the heat and humidity of a Florida summer. All bulls have received a full regiment of vaccinations and will be screened by temperament and structural soundness. Buyers should understand, however, that these are yearling bulls born in the fall of 1999. A management fact sheet will be provided to each buyer to guide them on the proper care and use of yearling bulls.

Currently there are also 62 winter born bulls on test. These bulls will sell on Friday, February 16. The Northwest Florida Beef Conference and Trace Show will be held on Thursday the 15th, the day before the sale, and will provide producers an opportunity to get a better understanding of how the bull test works and how to use the data to select their future herd sires.

WINTER SUPPLEMENT COSTS STABLE FOR MOST FEEDS

Fall is here and now is a good time to consider what supplements you will feed to your cattle this winter. Calf prices are higher this year and the optimum supplementation program for the current market may be higher than in the past.

A mineral-vitamin supplement offered free-choice is recommended to be fed year-around. Other articles in the past few months have provided recommended formulas for Florida. When considering protein and energy supplements for grazing cattle, the first question to address is which nutrient is most limiting. A protein shortage can limit forage intake and digestibility and meeting a protein deficiency before supplementing energy is usually economically justified. In cases such as pregnant beef cows in good body condition, feeding a protein supplement often improves performance enough that additional energy supplement is not cost effective. In other situations such as weaned heifers developed to breed as yearlings or thin cows, an energy supplement balanced with protein is usually needed to achieve the economically optimum performance. If you are not sure whether protein is limiting performance in your cattle, a forage test for protein and TDN (measure of available energy) can provide useful information.

Once you have established which nutrient is most limiting and the type of supplement most cost effective, you cam evaluate which feed is best to provide those nutrients in your situation. There are many protein supplements available. The protein and TDN concentrations of a few supplements are shown im Table 1. The cost of 100 pounds of protein from each source can be easily calculated and is an important factor when considering a protein source. If you need semi-load quantities and can store and handle bulk feeds then purchase costs are usually lower. Protein can be purchased for under $20 for 100 pounds from several of the bulk feeds. However, the added costs for storage, losses during feeding and storage, and added labor and equipment must be considered when comparing these sources to other supplements. Whole cottonseed has been used buy many cattlemen across Florida. The cotton crop in the Southeast is expected to be lower this year due to drought and prices are projected to be higher. Whole cottonseed prices will be seasonally lower during cotton harvest (September and October) and purchasing during harvest usually reduces the purchase cost. Bagged feeds or supplements designed to be self fed have higher costs per unit of protein but some of these supplements such as liquid feeds delivered to you lick tank you are hiring someone to feed your cattle.

Hay is widely used to supplement cattle during the winter. However, the cost of TDN from hay is more than some of alternatives available this fall (Table 2). Considering the 10 to 25% of the hay is usually wasted (not consumed), this increases the cost of TDN delivered to your cattle even more compared to some of the other alternatives. Several commodities are low in cost and this situation continues due to record quantities of feed grains produced in the U.S. One of the reasons for the high calf prices is the low feed grain prices resulting in feedlot gains of $40 to $45 per 100 pounds. Although you may be able to purchase TDN at lower cost than hay from several commodities, some hay or standing forage is needed to prevent digestive upsets and keep the rumen functioning well. Several commodities purchased in quantity provide 100 pounds of TDN for under $6 but some of these are not balanced with protein and minerals. The cost of balancing these commodities, storing, and feeding must be added when considering these alternatives. Citrus pulp, a Florida by product, is low in protein and phosphorus and needs to be balanced for these nutrients. Costs for dehydrating and pelleting citrus pulp are above the current market value and several citrus processing plants have wet citrus pulp (70 to 85% moisture) available at the plant for no cost during processing season. If your cattle are within 30 miles of a citrus processing plant this may be good alternative.

Cattlemen are in a unique situation with higher calf prices and relatively stable and low costs for most supplements. Now is the time to evaluate the supplements. Now is the time to evaluate the supplement needs of your cattle, consider your alternatives and develop a plan for this winter. If you need additional information on forage testing or supplemental feeds, several publications are available form your county agent, over the WWW(http://www.animal.ufl,edu; then go to extension) or by contacting Bill Kunkle (kunkle@animal.ufl,edu; 352-392-9059).

Source: Dr. W.E. Kunkle, Associate Professor, Department of Animal Science,
University of Florida, November 2000

PROVIDE WINTER SHELTER FOR HORSES

As winter approaches, shelter for your horses shouldn't be forgotten. Healthy horses can tolerate our normally mild winter conditions. A moderately fat horse with a full coat of hair needs only minimal shelter because the horse's fat and hair coat trap body heat.

Windbreaks are important, because hard rank, wet snow or wind can lay down and disrupt the hair coat. This can cause the horse to lose body heat. If you have a stand of woods, a ravine, or the bottom of a steep hill, they can serve as windbreaks.

Run-in sheds can be build for horses with no natural windbreaks. Run-in sheds have several advantages. They are less expensive than maintaining horses in stalls and there is less danger of fire. Run-in sheds can also reduce your labor when maintaining groups of horses.

But you should consider some of the disadvantages. Horses have better aptitudes, get more exercise and are healthier when kept outside. Injury risks are higher in run-in sheds. You cannot individually control each animal's feed intake can't be individually controlled and the animal's hair coat will be thicker and look dirtier than a horse in a barn.

Unless your horse needs special care or is being prepared for sale or show, the advantages of run-in-sheds far outweigh the disadvantages.

Run-in sheds are usually three-sided with the opening facing away from prevailing winds. In Florida and south Alabama, our winters are mild enough that a shed can be open on three sides with only a solid back wall. Build them in a well-drained area with the entrance at least 12 feet high and wide enough for all the horses to run out safely. Interior height should be a minimum nine feed, and allowing approximately 75 square feet per horse.

Source: Dr. Cindy Mc Call, Extension Animal Scientist
Alabama Cooperative Extension System

FIREWOOD PESTS

Cool weather this time of the year brings on thoughts of having a fire in the fireplace of wood stove. Firewood brought into the home, garage or moved onto the porch can be a source of unwanted pests. Most pests living in firewood pose no threats to people, furniture, or to the structure. Nonetheless, homeowners often become concerned then insects emerge from wood that is brought indoors and crawl or fly about the house.

Several Types of pests may be found living in firewood. Termites, wood boring beetles and carpenter ants often tunnel and feed within firewood logs, but upon emergence, usually will not infest structural wood or furniture inside the home. Other kinds of pests simply hide or overwinter beneath the bark. Examples include centipedes, ground beetles, stink bugs, pillbugs, spiders, scorpions and wood cockroaches. Typically, these pests emerge within a few days of the wood being brought indoors. For the most part they are harmless but can be a genuine nuisance.

Firewood pests may be controlled for the most part by management of the firewood itself. Spraying the wood with insecticides is not necessary, effective, nor recommended and could result in harmful vapors when the wood is burned. A mush better approach is to:

1. Store firewood outdoors, only bringing in what you plan to burn immediately or within a few hours.
   Storing firewood for extended periods inside the home or garage allows pests developing or hiding in the wood to emerge within the home.

2. Position the woodpile away from the house and off the ground. Firewood stacked against the side of a building impedes ventilation and encourages moisture problems. Storing the wood in this manner also provides a direct, hidden avenue for termites and carpenter ants into the structure.

3. Burn older wood first. This shortens the time during which pest infestations can become established.

4. Shake or knock logs together to dislodge any pests clinging to bark. Don't forget to check bottoms of log carriers, since pests often crawl into these when logs are transported into the home. The occasional insect emerging from firewood can easily be eliminated using a broom or a vacuum cleaner.

Source: Agronomy Notes

The use of trade names in this publication is solely for the purpose of providing specific information. It is not a guarantee, warranty, or endorsement of the product names and does not signify that they are approved to the exclusion of others.

Sincerely,

John D. Atkins

Extension Agent
Santa Rosa County